








Digital Tachograph FAQ



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General Issues

- **What is a Digital Tachograph?**

A digital tachograph is a control device for road transport.

The digital tachograph is composed of a Vehicle Unit (VU) essentially containing a printer, two slots for the cards and a display. It is connected to the gearbox via a secured sensor. The VU is the brain of the system. It is able to hold data in the mass memory on drivers and their periods of driving and duty for about a 12 month period. It also and among others holds data relating to faults, attempts to tamper with the system, over speeding, calibration details, and when data has been accessed, for example, by the Police.

It functions with smart cards. Drivers, companies (operators), workshops (tachograph calibration centres) and enforcement officers (Police for example) have each smart cards according to their specific needs. These enable them to use and / or give access to the data in the VU.

- **What is a digital tachograph?**

A Tachograph is a device that is installed in your truck and it has the size of a typical car radio. The digital tachograph combines the functions of a clock and a speedometer. Fitted to a motor vehicle, a tachograph records the vehicle's speed and whether it is moving or is stationary.

The installation and usage of the device is mandatory according to a European Regulamentation and the objective is to keep the driver safe and avoid prolonged periods of driving, that can cause problems of security for the transportations on road.

We sometimes refer to the Digital Tachograph as VU, that stands for Vehicle Unit.

The Digital Tachograph stores digital data of the driver activities and vehicle activities on its internal memory and separately on a driver's smart card. A truck operator must periodically download this data from the digital tachograph and the driver cards. He also needs to analyse the data, to ensure that the rules have been complied with.

- **Which is the difference between a digital and an analogue tachograph ?**

The analogue tachograph is a device that writes data on a paper chart/disc. A paper chart contains data of a maximum of 24 hours.

All the vehicles are oblidged to have a digital tachograph installed. The digital version ensures a higher level of accuracy in the data registration and it can store a bigger amount of data. The Digital Tachograph needs to be used with specific cards: Driver/Company/Workshop/Control card that will register your driving data, that you will need to download using specific devices like the RS Digidown and the RS Cardreader.

- **What means VU?**

VU is the abbreviation for Vehicle Unit and is basically the actual Digital/Analogic Tachograph installed in your truck.

- **Must all vehicles with traditional analogue tachograph be converted and equipped with digital ones?**

No. There will be no retrofitting of existing vehicles with the introduction of digital tachographs. This Regulation only applies to vehicles applying for registration for the first time after deadlines have been

adopted.

However, in case of breakdown of the analogue tachograph, we recommend you to contact your national authority and check which kind of tachograph you should install in your vehicle. National authorities are listed under the Points of Contact Section on our website.

- **How will roadside checks be carried out in the future?**

Since there will be no retrofitting of digital tachograph for existing vehicles already equipped with analogue tachograph, both vehicles equipped with analogue tachograph and digital tachograph will be controlled on the road by control authorities.

The fact that a digital tachograph records data on a longer period (average of 28 days for the driver card and of 365 days for the vehicle unit) does not change enforcement rules. Controlled periods remain on a 7-day basis.

- **Will there be only Digital Tachographs in the future?**

With the entry into force of the Regulation (EC) n°2135/98, new registered vehicles will only be fitted with digital tachographs.

Since there is no retrofitting of existing vehicles with digital tachograph, for many years companies will operate with mixed fleets of both analogue and digital tachographs.

Within AETR countries, traditional analogue tachographs can be installed on vehicles until 2010.

- **How much does a Digital Tachograph cost?**

To check the price of a digital tachograph and other features of the recording equipment, please contact tachograph manufacturers.

- **Can the mass memory data in vehicle unit be downloaded?**

Using the download interface, mass memory data can be transferred to external data storage media.

A company, workshop or control card is necessary for access. Driver cards do not give access to downloading.

- **What happens when the driver card data memory or the mass memory in vehicle unit is full?**

With average use, the last 28 working days are stored on the driver card and the last 365 days are stored in the mass memory of the vehicle unit (VU).

The mass memory operates a rolling system in which the latest data automatically overwrites the oldest stored data.

Earlier data is lost if it has not been downloaded or backed up on another data storage media.

Legal Requirements

- **On what legal basis is the Digital Tachograph introduced?**

In the European Union, the use of the digital tachograph is mandatory on the basis of Council Regulation (EC) n°2135/98 that amends Council Regulation (EEC) n°3821/85 and Council Directive n°88/599/EEC.

Commission Regulation (EC) n°1360/2002 introduces all technical requirements for the digital tachograph and tachograph cards.

In the AETR countries, a transitional period has been negotiated by contracting parties in Geneva at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The date of entry into force of the AETR as modified by the introduction of the digital tachograph, is 2010.

- **Which rules apply in AETR countries?**

For the time being, analogue tachographs with paper record sheets are used.

From 16 June 2010, AETR countries will be required to switch to digital tachographs for new registered vehicles.

Requirements for downloading the digital tachograph

- **How can I download the data ?**

To download the data from drivers' cards, you need to have a smartcard reader as RS Cardreader.

To download data also from digital tachographs (VU's), you need to have a VU download device, such as the RS Digidown digital tachograph reader.

- **When should I download the data ?**

Driver card

The requirement for the driver card is to download the card every 28 days. Also, the data needs to be stored for at least 1 year available for inspection.

Digital tachograph

There is a mandatory requirement to download every digital tachograph (vehicle unit) every 3 months and store the data for at least 1 year.

You are a driver

- **What is a Driver Card?**

It is a smart card to be used every day when taking over a vehicle fitted with a digital tachograph. It stores drivers' activities and has an average memory capacity of 28 days.

You will find full information on all 4 types of tachograph cards on our web site in the section Key Elements, under Tachograph Cards.

- **Who can apply for a driver card?**

All drivers who are subject to Regulation (EEC) n°3820/85.
A driver applicant should check specific conditions and procedures for card issuing in the country where he has his normal residence.

More information is provided on the Key Elements Section, under Card Issuing Procedure.

National card issuing authorities are listed on the Points of Contact Section of this website.

- **How do I get my driver card?**

The driver card is issued by relevant national card issuing authorities in EU Member States.

On the Points of Contact Section of this website you will find the list of national Card Issuing Authorities.

- **Can I have more than one driver card?**

No.

Driver card is personal and unique.
It is forbidden to hold more than one valid driver card.

- **What happens if my driver card is faulty, gets lost or stolen?**

The driver must apply for a replacement card within 7 calendar days of the driver card being defective, lost or stolen.

The issuing authority must issue a replacement card within five working days of receiving a valid application.

In the meantime, the driver must print out data on his driving and rest times recorded in the Vehicle Unit (VU) at the end of the journey, add his personal details and sign the printouts.

It is forbidden (except in some restricted circumstances) for a driver to continue to drive for more than 15 calendar days without a valid driver card.

- **What does the Digital Tachograph record?**

It records drivers' activities, speed, distances, identification data of the vehicle, of the tachograph fitted, calibration data as well as faults and attempts to manipulate the system.

To get more information on this issue, go on the Key Elements Section of this website, go to How to Use It part that has a page on What Does the Digital Tachograph Record.

- **Can control authorities find out if I am driving with an invalid driver card?**

Yes.

Issuing authorities keep a record of issued, valid and invalid cards and exchange data through TACHOnet (see our web site under Key elements, section TACHOnet).

If you use a card that has been declared as faulty, lost or stolen, you will be detected.

- **What happens when the driver card data memory or the mass memory in vehicle unit is full?**

With average use, the last 28 working days are stored on the driver card and the last 365 days are stored in the mass memory of the vehicle unit (VU).

The mass memory operates a rolling system in which the latest data automatically overwrites the oldest stored data.

Earlier data is lost if it has not been downloaded or backed up on another data storage media.

- **Can I display, print out or download the information stored on the driver card?**

Data can be displayed on the tachograph screen, printed out by the Vehicle Unit (VU) or via a card reader using a printer connected to a laptop and can be downloaded via the VU or via any other other dedicated equipment.

You are a Road Transport company

- **What is a Company Card?**

It is a smart card issued to transport company by the competent authority of the Member State where the company is established to be used to download data stored in tachograph mass memory and to lock the data belonging to this company against any unauthorised access.

You will find full information on all 4 types of tachograph cards in the Key Elements, under Tachograph Cards.

- **Who gets a Company Card?**

A company should check specific conditions and procedures for card issuing in the country where it has its headquarters registered.

More information is provided on the Key Elements Section, under Card Issuing Procedure.

National Card Issuing Authorities are listed on the Points of Contact Section of this website.

- **Can a company get more than one Company Card?**

Yes.

Companies can apply for more than one company card according to the procedures and conditions set up in each country by competent national authorities in charge of card issuing.

- **Do I have to fit Digital Tachographs in all vehicles so far equipped with analogue tachographs?**

There is no obligation for retrofitting existing vehicles with digital tachographs.

Only vehicles registered for the first time after the entry into force of the deadlines, which will take place on 1 May 2006, will have to be fitted with digital tachographs.

- **What does the Digital Tachograph record?**

It records drivers' activities, speed, distances, identification data of the vehicle, of the tachograph fitted, calibration data as well as faults and attempts to manipulate the system.

To get more information on this issue, go on the Key Elements Section of this website, go to How to Use It part that has a page on What Does the Digital Tachograph Record.

- **Does the Vehicle Unit (VU) have to be checked regularly?**

Yes.

Digital tachographs have to be checked every 2 years at least by approved workshops.

- **Is there an obligation to archive data from Digital Tachograph?**

Yes.

Companies must keep a copy for at least one year (check the exact duration with your national authorities since this can be regulated differently by Member States) of both drivers' cards data as well as those from Vehicle Units (or mass memory) and therefore regularly download data.

- **How will company checks be carried out in the future?**

For the time being, there is no ruling at EU level that, unlike storage obligation for diagrams charts, prescribes regular downloading and saving of mass memory data and/or driver card, printout archiving or similar. However it is highly recommended to voluntarily proceed to regular data downloading and printing.

Furthermore, downloading could have been made mandatory in your country by national law. Member States are responsible for enforcing social legislation and we therefore recommend you to contact the competent authority in your country.

RS Hardware

- **How long does it take to download data from the driver card with the RS Cardreader ?**

To download data from a driver's card using the RS Cardreader takes between 5 and 10 seconds.

- **How long does it take to download data from the digital tachograph with the RS Digidown ?**

To download 90 days of data from a VU using the RS Digidown takes approx 15 minutes. This depends on the type of tachograph and the activities performed with the vehicle.

- **How do I download the data from the digital tachograph ?**

To download the data from the digital tachograph, first you insert the company card in the digital tachograph, then you simply connect the RS Digidown digital tachograph reader, to the vehicle unit and copy the stored data from the digital tachograph; then the data is ready to be transferred to your PC.

RS Software

- **Who is using this software?**

The software is suitable for every fleetsize company varying from a single track driver till large fleetsize companies, everyone will be able to exploit all the futures and innovations that the RS DigiTac offers you.

- **Why do I need software?**

The software lets you to store, view and make reports of the data out of the digital tachograph (card and VU). With the RS DigiTac software for the digital tachograph you meet the legal requirements for downloading and storing all your digital data in its original format. It is designed for all operators to meet requirements against the lowest costs.)

To see the main features and benefits of the software visit the section Solutions >>Software >> RS DigiTac

- **Is RS DigiTac software easy to install? Do I need to have a lot of computer knowledge?**

The RS DigiTac software is very easy to use and to install. You can install it yourself even when you only have basic understanding of a computer. Once you start the installation, just follow the instructions that will appear on your screen. For any help you can also contact the RS Helpdesk anytime or you can use the RS Software Installation Service.

- **How can I install the RS DigiTac software?**

To install the RS DigiTac software, you have to insert the CD-ROM that has been delivered with the package and follow the instructions that will be shown on your computer screen. You can also download the RS DigiTac software for the digital tachograph from the website.

- **Do I need to renew the RS DigiTac software after one year?**

No, you will find updates on our website, which will be free to download.

- **How many drivers and trucks can I register with the RS DigiTac software?**

You can register an unlimited number of trucks in the RS DigiTac software for the digital tachograph.

- **Can I export data from the software?**

Yes, you can export the data in different formats (Word, Excel, PDF) easy to read and compatible with other PC.

- **Is it free to upgrade the RS DigiTac software when needed?**

Yes, you will find upgrades on the Support >> Downloads page.

- **Which download keys / card readers are compatible with RS DigiTac software?**

The RS DigiTac digital tachograph software requires a standard PC smartcard reader and works with all common VU download devices. For the best compatibility we suggest you to use RS hardware products.

- **Which are the technical requirements for running the RS DigiTac software on my computer?**

RS DigiTac software runs on any PC with Windows 2000, XP and Vista.

- **What kind of files can I import within the RS DigiTac software ?**

You can import all type of digital tachograph and drivercard files with the RS DigiTac software (.esm/.ddd).